

## YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY!

Natural areas present hazards. Rocks roll, trees topple, and limbs drop without warning. Icy or uneven ground, wild animals, and changing weather pose dangers. People may create other hazards through campfires, traffic, snowplay, and poor decisions.

Water is the main cause of death here. Many drowning victims were walking or climbing near rivers and unexpectedly fell in.

The Park Service works to reduce risks, but your safety is in your own hands. Keep alert. Read warnings and ask a ranger for advice.

# Be Safe!

**DROWNING:** The #1 cause of death in national parks! Be extra careful around water; falling in is as dangerous as swimming. Once in a river, getting out can be nearly impossible: Rocks are smooth and slippery; swift, cold water rapidly saps your strength. Currents are always stronger than they appear.

**PLAGUE:** Please do not feed or touch ANY park animals. Fleas on rodents can carry plague. Deer mice feces can carry hantavirus.

**POISON OAK:** This common shrub grows up to 5000 feet elevation: Red leaves with whitish berries in fall; bare in winter; shiny green leaves in groups of three in spring. If you touch any part of the plant, wash skin and clothes right away.



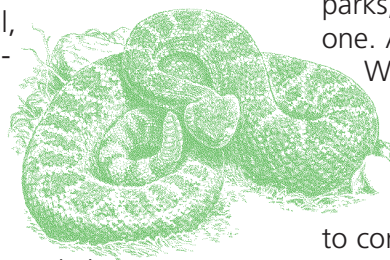
**TICKS:** Common in foothill and Kings Canyon grasses; check yourself after a walk. Their bite is painless, but a small percentage carry Lyme disease. Remove them carefully with tweezers; seek a doctor's advice.



**GIARDIA** in lakes and streams can cause intestinal upset. Iodine and other chemicals may not be as reliable as heat in killing bacteria and Giardia, but can be effective if used properly. Boil drinking water at least 3 minutes.

**HYPOTHERMIA:** This life-threatening condition can occur year-round. Stay dry; snack often. If others don't respond to the need for warmer clothes or are stumbling, forgetful, or extremely tired and drowsy, get warm sugary drinks into them immediately. Get them into dry clothing, sleeping bags, and shelter.

**RATTLESNAKES**, found in much of these parks, are especially common in the foothills and near water. Watch where you put your hands and feet! Do not harass or kill them; this is when most bites occur. Bites are rarely lethal, but tissue damage can be severe. If bitten, avoid panic; call a ranger or 911.



**LIGHTNING:** See dark clouds or lightning or hear thunder? Get inside a large building or a vehicle (not convertible), if possible. Do not stand under trees or in shallow caves. Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape such as standing on a ridge, on Moro Rock, or in open meadows. Stay away from open water, wire fences, and metal railings, which can carry lightning from a distance.

**WEST NILE VIRUS** is passed by bites from infected mosquitos. Human illness is not common, but take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

**CARBON MONOXIDE:** This odorless, colorless gas can be fatal. Never burn charcoal in closed spaces, e.g. a tent, camper, or RV.

**OZONE POLLUTION:** See air-quality forecasts in visitor centers. Most ozone rises into the Sierra on warm winds. Levels of this colorless gas are highest May to October, peaking in late afternoon. The peaks sometimes reach "unhealthy" state/federal standards, and can affect respiratory systems. Ozone forms from gases in car and factory exhaust.

**CELL PHONES** rarely work well in these mountains; don't rely on them. Note where pay telephones are available (see pages 8 & 9).

**COUGARS** roam throughout the parks, but you are unlikely to see one. Attacks are rare, but be aware.

Watch children closely; never let them run ahead. Cautiously move away if you find a partially buried animal carcass.

If you see a cougar, the goal is to convince it that you are not prey:

- Don't run; it may trigger pursuit.
- Try to appear as large as possible. Don't crouch or try to hide.
- Hold your ground or back away slowly while facing the cougar.
- Pick up children.
- If the mountain lion acts aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw stones or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fight back!
- Report any cougar sightings.

**BE SAFE:** Avoid going alone. Tell someone your plans and return time. Watch and listen for potential hazards above you, around you, and on the ground. Beware of trails and sidewalks slippery with ice or leaves. Slow down to safely share roads and trails with people and wildlife.

**SAFE DRINKING WATER:** The 13 park water systems are tested to ensure that they meet federal and state standards. Ask at visitor centers about the Annual Consumer Confidence Reports.

### OPERATION NO-GROW

Prevent illegal marijuana growing! Keep parks safe, natural, and free from illegal activities! Report suspicious activities: 1-888-NPS-CRIME.

## Rules of park roads

**EXPECT TRAFFIC DELAYS** on the Generals Highway south of Giant Forest. See details on the back page (page 12).

**22' VEHICLE LENGTH LIMIT** on Generals Hwy between Hospital Rock Picnic Area and Giant Forest Museum due to single-lane road. Between Potwisha Campground and Hospital Rock, *advised* maximum vehicle length is 22 feet (6.7m). Maximum limit on other parts of the Generals Highway is 40 feet (12 m) for single vehicles, 50 feet (15 m) for vehicle + towed unit. Alternatives: Hwy 180 from Fresno is straighter, less steep, and wider. If towing a car, camp in the foothills and use the car.

### FINDING GASOLINE

No gas stations within the park. Only Grant Grove market sells cans of emergency gas. Fill up in Three Rivers, Clingan's Junction, or in the National Forest at:

- Hume Lake Christian Camp:

559-305-7770. Year-round 24 hours with credit card. 11 miles (18 km) north of Grant Grove via Hwy 180.

- Stony Creek Village: 1-559-565-3909. Opens 5/5, weather permitting. Available 24 hours with credit card. Between Wuksachi & Grant Grove on the Generals Hwy.
- Kings Canyon Lodge: 1-559-335-2405. Opens after 4/29; gas usually sold 9am-dark. 17 miles (27 km) north from Grant Grove on Hwy 180.

### STILL-ICY ROADS & TRAILS

Spring storms & cold nights can mean slick surfaces, especially in shady areas. Walk & drive carefully! Snow tires or chains may be required after storms. 24-hour road-condition recording: 1-559-565-3341, press 9, then 4.

### EMERGENCY CAR REPAIRS

For a tow: 565-3341 then press zero (24 hours). In Sequoia Park only, AAA available 24 hours for

lock outs, jump starts, out-of-gas, minor repairs: call 565-4070.

### DON'T LOSE YOUR BRAKES

Frequent braking causes overheating and brake failure. Instead, *always* downshift when going downhill. In automatic vehicles, put the gearshift on 1, 2 or L. The engine gets louder, but it will save your brakes.

### SPRING OPENINGS OF NARROW, WINDING ROADS

IN KINGS CANYON & NATIONAL FOREST/SEQUOIA MONUMENT - Some openings may be delayed due to late winter storms: Hwy 180 East to Cedar Grove in the Kings Canyon: 4/29 at noon. Panoramic Point Road: 5/20. Redwood Mountain Road (NPS) & Big Meadows, Quail Flat/Ten Mile, Converse Basin (FS): Unpaved, unplowed. Opens when snow melts. Kings River Bridge is closed for replacement. See back page.

IN SEQUOIA - Crystal Cave Road opens 5/14, Maximum vehicle length 22'.

Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow opens 5/21 or sooner if conditions permit. During shuttle season 5/26-9/25, single vehicles more than 22 feet long and combination vehicles are prohibited; exception if valid disabled-parking placards are displayed. Mineral King Road: Open 5/27, weather permitting. Until then, gate closed at Lookout Point station requires a free permit from Foothills Visitor Center. RVs & trailers not recommended (not permitted in campgrounds). South Fork Road: Partially unpaved. Slippery when wet. Middle Fork Road: Open by mid-May; slippery when wet.

### BICYCLES

Ride on roads (not trails), single file, and with traffic. Wear light colors after dark. People under 18 must wear a helmet.

### MOTORCYCLES

Avoid oil buildup on pavement.

### PREVENT CAR FIRES

Hot brakes & mufflers can easily start fires. Stop only on paved areas, not on grasses.